

# English Toolkit: Indicator 1.2.1

## Goal 1.0 Reading, Reviewing and Responding to Texts

Expectation 1.2 The student will construct, examine, and extend meaning of traditional and contemporary works recognized as having significant literary merit.

Indicator 1.2.1 The student will consider the contributions of plot, character, setting, conflict, and point of view when constructing the meaning of a text.

### Assessment Limits:

Determining the significance of the following as each contributes to the meaning of a text

- plot sequence of events (including foreshadowing and flashback), cause-and-effect relationships, and events that are exposition, climax or turning point, resolution (Students will not be asked to label events.)
- characters' defining traits, motivations, and developments throughout the text
- details that provide clues to the setting, the mood created by the setting, and the role the setting plays in the text
- conflicts that motivate characters and those that serve to advance the plot
- the perspective of the author or speaker as well as the effects of first or third person narration and multiple narrators within and across text(s)

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## Scoring

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## Public Release #1 - Selected Response Item - Released in 2005

English Indicator 1.2.1

Handout(s):

- English Resource: Mama's Pie

Read the story "Mama's Pie." Then answer the following.

Which word would the narrator most likely use to describe Mama?

- A. courageous
- B. playful
- C. protective
- D. wise

## Public Release #2 - Selected Response Item - Released in 2005

English Indicator 1.2.1

Handout(s):

- English Resource: In the Country of Grasses

Read the essay "In the Country of Grasses."

Which phrase best describes Samuel?

- A. helpful but quiet in manner
- B. witty and clever with words
- C. polite but uncertain of himself
- D. sad and mysterious to strangers

## Public Release #3 - Selected Response Item - Released in 2005

English Indicator 1.2.1

Handout(s):

- English Resource: On Safari with the Experts
- English Resource: In the Country of Grasses

Read the excerpt from "On Safari with the Experts," an article about a safari outfitting camp in Kenya, East Africa. Then answer the following about both "In the Country of Grasses" and "On Safari with the Experts."

Read these sentences about Samuel from paragraph 8 of "In the Country of Grasses."

He is respectful of his teachers and those he is teaching. In this way he is generous. He gives the pleasure of discovery. Slowly, African riddles unravel themselves like a piece of cut linen.

Which paragraph from the article "On Safari with the Experts" best expresses a similar idea about Jackson?

- A. paragraph 1
- B. paragraph 2

- C. paragraph 3
- D. paragraph 5

Public Release #4 - Selected Response Item - Released in 2005

English Indicator 1.2.1

Handout(s):

- English Resource: Starwalking with Sarah

Which word best describes the father in "Starwalking with Sarah"?

- A. cautious
- B. detached
- C. humorous
- D. instructive

Public Release #5 - Selected Response Item - Released in 2007

English Indicator 1.2.1

Handout(s):

- English Resource: Rough Road Ahead: Do Not Exceed Posted Speed Limit.

Read the essay "Rough Road Ahead: Do Not Exceed Posted Speed Limit." Then answer the following:

Which of these is the most challenging problem faced by the author during his journey?

- A. the lack of water
- B. the rolling hills
- C. the poisonous snakes
- D. the condition of the road

Public Release #6 - Selected Response Item - Released in 2006

English Indicator 1.2.1

Handout(s):

- English Resource: Breakfast

Read "Breakfast," the first chapter from the novel *Jim the Boy*. Then answer the following:

Which word best describes Jim's attitude toward his mother?

- A. angry
- B. grateful
- C. resentful
- D. understanding

## Public Release #7 - Selected Response Item - Released in 2006

English Indicator 1.2.1

Handout(s):

- English Resource: Ghost Crab

Read the essay "Ghost Crab." Then answer the following.

Which word best describes the author's attitude toward the ghost crab?

- A. frightened
- B. indifferent
- C. respectful
- D. satisfied

## Public Release #8 - Selected Response Item - Released in 2007

English Indicator 1.2.1

Handout(s):

- English Resource: Rough Road Ahead: Do Not Exceed Posted Speed Limit.

Read the essay "Rough Road Ahead: Do Not Exceed Posted Speed Limit." Then answer the following:

Which of these best characterizes the mood changes of the author during the journey he describes?

- A. doubt followed by delight and then satisfaction
- B. cautiousness followed by terror and then pride
- C. indifference followed by despair and then anger
- D. confidence followed by determination and then relief

## Public Release #9 - Selected Response Item - Released in 2007

English Indicator 1.2.1

Handout(s):

- English Resource: Down with the Forests

Read the essay "Down with the Forests." Then answer the following:

This essay was most likely written from the point of view of someone who

- A. worries about the effect people have on the environment
- B. believes it is important to read the newspaper every day
- C. supports the use of natural resources for product packaging
- D. thinks that politicians act in the best interest of the environment

## Public Release #10 - Selected Response Item - Released in 2007

English Indicator 1.2.1

Handout(s):

- English Resource: A Sea Worry

Read the essay "A Sea Worry." Then answer the following:

The author begins to view body-surfing more positively when

- A. some students get accepted at mainland colleges
- B. her students associate surfing with their ancestors
- C. her son and his friends describe a surfing experience
- D. she sees young men driving to work

Public Release #11 - Selected Response Item - Released in 2007

English Indicator 1.2.1

Handout(s):

- English Resource: A Sea Worry

Read the essay "A Sea Worry." Then answer the following:

Which action best shows the author's concern for the boys' safety?

- A. She asks if they told the lifeguard about the shark.
- B. She notices that they cross their hearts with water.
- C. She insists that they describe the experience.
- D. She encourages them to go home and read.

## Public Release #12 - Brief Constructed Response Item - Released in 2005

English Indicator 1.2.1

Handout(s):

- English Resource: Mussels in April
- English Resource: Mama's Pie

Write a response that compares the speaker in the poem "Mussels in April" and the narrator of the story "Mama's Pie." In your response, support your conclusion with appropriate details from both the poem and the story.

Write your explanation on the lines in the answer box below.

The following 8 Anchor Papers represent a range of score points and are used in conjunction with the rubrics to assess student responses.

## Anchor Paper #1

Score for Anchor Paper #1: Rubric Score 1

Annotation: This response shows evidence of a minimal understanding of the two texts. The student presents a few relevant ideas; however, the response provides no support from the poem and/or story for these general ideas.



## Anchor Paper #2

Score for Anchor Paper #2: Rubric Score 1

Annotation: This response lists several appropriate, but general, comparisons between the poem and the story (both developed a relationship with a parent; done through a tradition involving food; plan to continue their tradition by performing the same actions with their children). Yet, no textual support for these concepts is provided.

## Anchor Paper #3

## Score for Anchor Paper #3: Rubric Score 1

Annotation: This response demonstrates a minimal understanding of the two texts. Although comparisons are presented (talks about an experience a child has with a parent; they are both family related), only a single specific text quote from "Mussels in April" is provided as support for these comparisons ('These family moments — cold outings, simmering pots, scraped fingers, salty steam, the clickclack shells'). More textual support is needed for a higher score.

## Anchor Paper #4

Score for Anchor Paper #4: Rubric Score 2

Annotation: This response demonstrates a partial understanding of the two texts. The student uses both expressed information (lines 13 — 15 of "Mussels in April"; the narrator of "Mama's Pie" also describes her events as 'a journey back in to family history') and implied information (both build strong relationships with their families through simple experiences; the torch is being passed from one generation to the next, thus building a stronger relationship between the parents and their children). These details support the writer's conclusion that the poem and the story share a common theme - building strong relationships with family.

## Anchor Paper #5

Score for Anchor Paper #5: Rubric Score 2

Annotation: This response demonstrates a literal understanding of the two texts. The student's basic premise is a generalization that both of the texts "deal with teaching." To support this general idea, the writer uses paraphrased accounts of events from the story and the poem (leap rocks, pick mussels, take them home, steam them to eat; pick berries, add sugar, make sweet syrup, bake the pie).

## Anchor Paper #6

Score for Anchor Paper #6: Rubric Score 2

Annotation: This response demonstrates a partial understanding of the two texts. Several similarities are presented. The first similarity (both have a reminiscent tone as well as a happy, but not upbeat tone) lacks support. The next (their story lines show a caring for tradition) is supported only by a quote from each text and lacks clear explanation. Another similarity (they have similar characters) is only partially explained, and the last idea (they have children who want to pass down the things their parents taught them) lacks supporting details.

## Anchor Paper #7

## Score for Anchor Paper #7: Rubric Score 3

Annotation: This response demonstrates an understanding of the complexities of the two texts. Similarities and differences (gender of the two; having fun; pass on the family traditions) are discussed throughout the response. Ideas are well supported through both expressed information ('scraped fingers, the clickclack shells;' 'I sensed that Mama and I were somehow equals and I felt privy to some feminine world I'd never known before;' 'These rituals to [his] children [he'll] pass on') and implied information (fascination of the mussels; clearly feminine, even as a little girl; the pie itself is not the point; focus on feelings and symbolism). Both the comparison and the contrast of the emotional aspects of the speaker and the narrator show a clear and insightful interpretation of the two texts.

## Anchor Paper #8

Score for Anchor Paper #8: Rubric Score 4

Annotation: This response demonstrates an understanding of the complexities of the two texts. The student clarifies and extends understanding through several similarities (both value family and passing family rituals down from generation to generation; this shows how sacred an act this was; these rituals are so meaningful to them that they are both going to continue them throughout the family history; simple traditions help unite the family). Each concept is accompanied by specific text support from both the poem and story. The description of the emotional characteristics of both the speaker and narrator (describes in a fascinated tone; thrilled about the experience; both narrators feel privileged; both feel just as strongly about passing down traditions) adds a thoughtful dimension to this response.

## Public Release #13 - Brief Constructed Response Item - Released in 2006

English Indicator 1.2.1

Handout(s):

- English Resource: *Anna and the King*

Read the screenplay *Anna and the King*. Then answer the following:

Carefully examine the photograph of the actor who played the role of King Mongkut in a production of *Anna and the King of Siam*.

Write a response that explains how the photograph represents King Mongkut as he is portrayed in the scene from the screenplay *Anna and the King*. In your response, support your conclusion with appropriate details from both the photograph and the screenplay.

Use the space on page \_\_\_ of your Answer Book for planning your response. Then write your response on the lines on page \_\_\_.

The following 8 Anchor Papers represent a range of score points and are used in conjunction with the rubrics to assess student responses.



## Anchor Paper #1

Score for Anchor Paper #1: Rubric Score 1

Annotation: This response shows evidence of a minimal understanding of the text. A brief description of King Mongkut (strong leader and proud) and specific details from the photograph (chest poked out; looks like he doesn't take anything from anybody) give some support. While the conclusion provided (he believes in things the traditional way) is an element of the screenplay, it lacks textual support.

## Anchor Paper #2

Score for Anchor Paper #2: Rubric Score 1

Annotation: By agreeing that the photograph and screenplay's character of King Mongkut have similarities, this response shows evidence of a minimal understanding of the text. Although comparisons are presented (he has authority; he looks like a royal and needs to be shown the respect of a royal), only a single specific text quote is provided (You do not set conditions, and you shall obey) as support.

## Anchor Paper #3

Score for Anchor Paper #3: Rubric Score 2

Annotation: This response demonstrates a partial understanding of the text. The student's basic premise is that in both the photograph and screenplay, King Mongkut is portrayed as stern, mean, and controlling. To support these ideas, the student uses paraphrased accounts of events from the screenplay (he demands that he be obeyed and listened to; he sees her as not being a good teacher because she is not old; he tells Anna that she must live in the palace quarters and refuses to get her her own house; he cuts her off as she is speaking or about to start speaking).

## Anchor Paper #4

Score for Anchor Paper #4: Rubric Score 2

Annotation: This response demonstrates a partial understanding of the text. The student uses both expressed information (there, ranged on a deep red carpet is a throng of prostrate noblemen and courtiers facing a raised dais; the stage direction indicates that he says that with flashing eyes) and implied information (he looks powerful and worshiped like a god from his people; we can see from his face that he wants to be respected and that he is ready to use force to obtain that). These details support the student's opinion that the picture makes a perfect portrait of the character.

## Anchor Paper #5

Score for Anchor Paper #5: Rubric Score 2

Annotation: Through the assertion that "the picture displays the same intellectual and physical description as the screenplay," the writer of this response demonstrates a partial understanding of the text. Specific text details (You do not set conditions, and you shall OBEY!; on a golden throne with a jewel-encrusted sword) and a literal description of the picture (the King's turned up chin; the medals, sashes and glittering robe) are presented as support. Implied ideas (displays the same arrogance and splendor; the King's haughty appearance...display[s] that he is in charge and everyone else is beneath him) help to address the demands of the question. Further development of these ideas is needed for a higher score.

## Anchor Paper #6

## Score for Anchor Paper #6: Rubric Score 3

Annotation: This response demonstrates an understanding of the complexities of the text. The student addresses the demands of the question through the use of both expressed information (eyes flashing; You do not set conditions, and you shall OBEY!; Scores of princes and princesses, none older than eleven, play around pools and pavilions. Peacocks stroll the grounds. A gong announces the King's presence; deep red carpet, golden throne, jewel-encrusted sword) and implied information (seems to be very stubborn; gives the impression he is angry and not one to be trifled with; King Mongkut also seems extremely rich and important). Specific details from the photograph (his thick eyebrows and stance [hands on his hips]; the decorations on his clothing [such as his medals and jewel studded belt]; sash that runs across his chest) also provide support. Extended understanding is shown when the student acknowledges certain subtleties found embedded in the photograph and screenplay (The physical description of his eyes especially clues us in on his characteristics and domineering personality; The capital letters also emphasize his need to be in control of a situation and his very dramatic personality [He often yells or emphasizes certain words and strides away from Anna without any kind of warning]).

## Anchor Paper #7

## Score for Anchor Paper #7: Rubric Score 3

Annotation: This response demonstrates an understanding of the complexities of the text. The basic theme (the garb and demenour of the actor who played the role of King Mongkut accurately portrays his haughty and standoffishness as shown in the text of the screen play) is discussed and supported throughout the response. Details from the photograph are compared and contrasted to appropriate and specific dialogue (gold-embazoned color; military stars...emphasize his pretentiousness; pretentious look; both hands on his hips; haughty posture; authoritatively given dialog; metallic cloak emphasizes his power and might). Textual quotes and analysis of stage directions help to clarify the ideas in this top level response.

## Anchor Paper #8

## Score for Anchor Paper #8: Rubric Score 3

Annotation: Agreeing that the character of King Mongkut is accurately portrayed in the photograph, this comprehensive response demonstrates an understanding of the complexities of the text. The student clarifies and extends understanding through several similarities (shown opulence, confidence, and arrogance; grandeur is felt in both; selfishness is found in both). Each concept is accompanied by specific details from both the screenplay and the photograph (decked with jewels and honors; his demanding stance and proud figure; his argument with Madame Leonowens and his acceptance of the prostrating noblemen; his self-absorbed expression; his behavior... towards his people). Insight is shown through several sophisticated ideas derived by reading and interpreting the text and question (displaying expensive fabrics and textures that are apparently worn on a daily basis; realistically relates...appropriate to the time period; he treats others as if they are inferior; financial security; he ignores the troubles of his people; blind obedience his subjects have towards him; he spends money enhancing his opulent appearance).



## Public Release #14 - Brief Constructed Response Item - Released in 2007

English Indicator 1.2.1

Handout(s):

- English Resource: Rough Road Ahead: Do Not Exceed Posted Speed Limit.

Read the essay "Rough Road Ahead: Do Not Exceed Posted Speed Limit." Then answer the following:

Write a response that explains how the features of the setting affect the cyclist. In your response, include examples from the essay that support your conclusion.

Use the space on page \_\_\_\_ in your Answer Book for planning your response. Then write your response on the lines on page \_\_\_\_.

The following 9 Anchor Papers represent a range of score points and are used in conjunction with the rubrics to assess student responses.

## Anchor Paper #1

Score for Anchor Paper #1: Rubric Score 1

Annotation: This response shows a minimal understanding of the text. The student describes the setting (California desert; passed a large snake; abandoned factory) and offers an unsupported generalization about how the setting affects the cyclist (dramatically).

## Anchor Paper #2

Score for Anchor Paper #2: Rubric Score 1

Annotation: This response shows evidence of a minimal understanding of the text. The student minimally describes the setting ('high deserts of California in June') and minimally explains how the cyclist is affected by this setting (he did not have a lot of water left).

## Anchor Paper #3

Score for Anchor Paper #3: Rubric Score 1

Annotation: This response shows evidence of a minimal understanding of the text. Some conditions of the setting are listed (lack of water; hot weather), and a minimal explanation is given for how each affected the cyclist. The response, however, also contains misreadings. The idea that "hot weather caused him to see Juice factory which was a mirage" is incorrect, and the reference to getting "directions {at the bait place} to get their faster" is another misconception.

## Anchor Paper #4

Score for Anchor Paper #4: Rubric Score 2

Annotation: This response demonstrates a partial understanding of the text. Features of the setting (heat; 'deserts of California in June;' rough riding conditions) are provided, and the student gives the effects of each (tired and very thirsty; discourages; painful and tiring). Expressed information from the text ('had been hitting my water bottles pretty regularly;' speed limit was 55 mph; 'crippling hill') supports these ideas.

## Anchor Paper #5

Score for Anchor Paper #5: Rubric Score 2

Annotation: This response demonstrates a partial understanding of the text. The student describes the features of the setting (the hot, humid environment of California; ghost town) and partially explains how the cyclist is affected (caused dehydration; 'wide rings of dried sweat;' making him weak; not able to get help with resupplying water).

## Anchor Paper #6

Score for Anchor Paper #6: Rubric Score 2

Annotation: This response demonstrates a partial understanding of the text. The student generally describes the overall effect of the setting as "negative" and offers an explanation. (They got his hopes up, and then crushed his confidence.) The student gives examples from the text to support this conclusion (water pump: 'I pumped that handle...water wouldn't cool down...had the flavor of battery acid' and Welches billboard: 'picture of a young boy pouring a refresing glass of juice'). For a higher score, the response needs to move beyond the literal by discussing in greater depth the connection between the setting and the cyclist.

## Anchor Paper #7

## Score for Anchor Paper #7: Rubric Score 3

Annotation: This response demonstrates an understanding of the complexities of the text. To support the conclusion that "the setting goes from supportive to the speaker to unsupportive" the student uses expressed and implied information from the text, documenting each new site's effect on the cyclist. For example, the old ghost town is "endearing," and "the sun was beginning to beat down, but I barely noticed." The deserted towns, ramshackle shed, several rusty pumps, and a corral are "disturbing" and "troubling." The student's insightful conclusion (as the speaker's situation becomes more and more desperate the setting is more and more hostile) provides further understanding that moves beyond the literal.



## Anchor Paper #8

## Score for Anchor Paper #8: Rubric Score 3

Annotation: This response demonstrates an understanding of the complexities of the text. The student views the overall effect of the setting on the cyclist as "negative" and supports this idea (the harsh settings cause the cyclist to become determined at first; the end of his journey he begins to lose hope). Expressed and implied information support the three stages of the trip - at the beginning ('the sun was beating down;' he is determined), in the middle (setting begins to get harsh; begins to anger the cyclist), and at the end (he begins to lose all hopes; 'it didn't really matter'). The conclusion (the changing and increasingly poor setting is directly related to the increasingly poor attitude of the cyclist) insightfully summarizes the student's understanding of the text.

## Anchor Paper #9

## Score for Anchor Paper #9: Rubric Score 3

Annotation: This response demonstrates an understanding of the complexities of the text. The student focuses on the idea that "traveling alone throughout the wilderness and environment give an individual plenty of time to contemplate on their state of being." Both expressed and implied support for this idea is interwoven throughout the response (a desolate stretch of road, lacking water and close to possible death he hopes to find a place to recuperate and regenerate) as the student compares the "rises and falls" of the cyclist's mood (hope diminishes; his excitement rises and falls back; hopes and mood are much like the rolling hills). The insightful conclusion (each passing town, water pump, and juice factory added to his thirst and hopelessness) further clarifies and extends understanding.

## Handouts

by Pamela Kennedy

I was nine the summer Mama taught me how to bake a pie. It was an occasion, a rite of passage, a journey back into family history. The lesson was full of truth, pungent as our wild berries, liberally dusted with flour, and punctuated with the wooden rolling pin.

I stood next to the cutting board, my dress covered with a folded dishtowel, cinched around my middle and tied at the back.

"You take this much flour," Mama said, dumping an undisclosed amount in a large bowl, "then you add shortening—about this much." She dropped a glob of the sticky white stuff into the flour. "Now a pinch of salt. Take this pastry cutter and cut through the flour and shortening until it looks like cornmeal. Here now, you do it."

I had no idea what cornmeal looked like, but I kept cutting through the mixture, certain Mama would give me a hint when it got to the right stage. After a bit, the flour and shortening were crumbly and coarse. Mama looked at it, nodded, and announced it was time to add the water.

"You never dump water into pie dough," Mama warned. "You sprinkle it on, a tiny bit at a time. Use your hand like this."

She dipped her fingers into a cup of water and shook the drops over the mixture, tossing it now and then with a fork. When the dough could be pressed together into a crumbly ball, she stopped, took about half of the mixture out of the bowl, and pressed it together into an oval on the floured board.

"Now you roll it out," she said, "but only roll it once. Pie crust is like people—you treat them gently and they turn out tender, but if you keep pushing and pressing them, they'll turn out tough and tasteless every time."

I rolled—center to edge—all around the circle.

"Don't worry if it crumbles around the edges," Mama said, noting my frustration. "That's the best sign of a good batch!" Gently we transferred the flattened dough into the pie plate.

"Now the berries." The tart wild blackberries, frosted with sugar and flour and seeping with purple juice, tumbled into the waiting pie shell. We had picked them the day before, hunting through the burned-off growth in the woods behind the cemetery. I still bore scars from the adventure: hairline scratches laced my hands and purple stains outlined my fingernails. These berries were earned with sweat and blood and would taste all the better for our efforts.

After I rolled the top crust, Mama cut a curved line across its center. "Just like my Mama used to do," she murmured. She crimped the edges with her finger and thumb, deftly creating a scalloped border around the pie. After brushing the top crust with cream, we slipped the pie into the oven, and Mama put on the teakettle—a sign we were to have a talk.

When the china cups were filled and steaming, Mama pulled two chairs up to the table and we sat. For the first time, I sensed that Mama and I were somehow equals and I felt special, privy to some feminine world I'd never known before. Mama stirred her tea and started to talk, introducing me to her past, the time before she was Mama.

"We were poor kids," she said, "but we never knew it. Daddy and Mama raised ten of us on a small farm where we had a little garden, a pasture, and an orchard, all surrounded by woods. We always had fresh or canned vegetables, milk from a cow, and plenty of eggs, even during the Depression. And Mama always made pies. There were green apple pies and pumpkin pies, even mince meat when one of the neighbors had good luck hunting and got a deer. But the favorite was always wild blackberry pie. We kids called them 'little creepy crawlers' because in the woods behind our house, the vines crept along the forest floor, tangling themselves around stumps and over stones. We'd clamber through the prickly vines, searching for the sweet, dark berries and plopping them into our tin lard buckets. The smell of the berries, warm from the sun, was heavenly; and we ate as many as we saved, staining our fingers and lips with the purple juice.

"My mother baked the pies as soon as we returned with the fruit. She always hummed while she baked, flour dust rising about her like a cloud and settling on her hair and faded cotton dress."

"Is that when you learned how to bake pies, Mama?" I asked, trying to imagine my mother as a young girl, scratched and stained with berry juice and filled with the same insecurities and sense of wonder as I.

"Yes," Mama said, and her lips curved in a smile, soft with remembrance. "I was just about your age, and I remember I had to stand on an apple crate to reach the counter top."

The fragrance of the baking pie wound around us, casting a spell of homey intimacy as we sipped our tea, sharing our heritage until the timer interrupted us with a rude buzz. As we removed the steaming pie from the oven, Mama sighed with satisfaction and said, "There, now that's a job well done." And somehow I know she meant more than just the baking of the pie.

The summer afternoon of my first pie was more than thirty years ago, and yet its memories are as sweet and real as the berries in the bowl before me. I think it's time to call my daughter in from play and show her how to bake a pie. Perhaps we'll sit and share a cup of tea while it bakes, and I will tell her how her great-grandma used to bake a pie.

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"Mama's Pie" by Pamela Kennedy, copyright © 1987 by Pamela Kennedy. Reprinted by permission of Pamela Kennedy.

When traveling to new country, it is a gift to have a guide. They know the nuances<sup>1</sup> of the world they live in. Samuel smells rain the night before it falls. I trust his instincts and borrow them until I uncover my own. But there is danger here. One can become lazy in the reliance on a guide. The burden of a newcomer is to pay attention.

The Land Rover slips into the savannah like a bird dog entering a marsh. We are fully present. I watch Samuel's eyes scan the horizon. He points south.

"Zebra," he says. "They are migrating north from Tanzania. Thousands more are on their way."

Hundreds of zebras walk the skyline. They become animated heat waves.

We drive closer. I have never seen such concentrations of animals. At one point I think I hear thunder. It is the hooves of wildebeests. Suddenly, the herd of zebra expands to include impalas, gazelles, and animals I do not recognize.

"Topi," Samuel says.

I flip through my field guide of African mammals and find it. An extraordinary creature, it is the color of mahogany with blue patches on its flanks and ocher<sup>2</sup> legs. I look at the topi again, this time through binoculars. Its black linear face with spiraling horns creates the illusion of a primitive mask. The topi I watch stands motionless on a termite mound. Binoculars down, I look at Samuel. He says the topi resemble hartebeests. A small herd of topi runs in front of the vehicle in a rocking-horse gait<sup>3</sup> and vanishes.

<sup>8</sup>Samuel gives away his knowledge sparingly—in gentle, quiet doses. He is respectful of his teachers and those he is teaching. In this way he is generous. He gives me the pleasure of discovery. Slowly, African riddles unravel themselves like a piece of cut linen.

The sweet hissing of grasses accompanies us as we move ahead. We pass the swishing tails of wildebeests. We are looking for lions.

<sup>10</sup>Anticipation is another gift for travelers in unfamiliar territory. It quickens the spirit. The contemplation of the unseen world; imagination piqued<sup>4</sup> in consideration of animals.

We stop. Samuel points. I see nothing. I look at Samuel for clues. He points again. I still see nothing but tall, tawny grasses around the base of a lone tree. He smiles and says, "Lions."

I look. I look so hard it becomes an embarrassment—and then I see eyes. Lion eyes. Two amber beads with a brown matrix. Circles of contentment until I stand; the lion's eyes change, and I am flushed with fear.

"Quiet," Samuel whispers. "We will watch for a while."

As my eyes become acquainted with lion, I begin to distinguish fur from grass. I realize there are two lions, a male and a female lying together under the stingy shade of a thorn tree. I can hear them breathe. The male is breathing hard and fast, his black mane in rhythm with the breeze. He puts his right paw on the female's shoulder. Ears twitch. We are no more than ten feet away. He yawns. His yellow canines are as long as my index finger. His jowls look like well-worn leather. He stands. The grasses brush his belly. Veins protrude from his leg muscles. This lion is lean and strong. No wonder that in the Masai mind every aspect of a lion is imbued<sup>5</sup> with magic.

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- <sup>1</sup> nuances: degrees of difference in meaning
  - <sup>2</sup> ocher: color having shades of yellow, orange, and brown
  - <sup>3</sup> gait: way of moving by lifting the feet in a different order or rhythm such as a trot, gallop, or run
  - <sup>4</sup> piqued: excited one's interest or curiosity
  - <sup>5</sup> imbued: filled; saturated

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<sup>1</sup> A new generation of Masai safari guides is growing up in Kenya, and their expertise can lead to memorable encounters with cheetah and other big game.

<sup>2</sup> At the airstrip, in the heart of the Masai Mara game reserve in Kenya, a fleet of safari vehicles is lined up, waiting to take incoming visitors to their camps and lodges. The driver-guides are dressed for the part in faded khaki—all except one, who sits at the wheel of his Toyota Land Cruiser wearing the blood-red robes of a Masai elder. Jackson ole Looseyia is an Il Dorobo Masai, a clan of hunter-gatherers who live in the hills just outside the reserve.

<sup>3</sup> On the way to Rekerro, the tented camp where Jackson is both a guide and a shareholder, we pause to watch a herd of buffalo. “Did you know a buffalo can produce 20 litres of saliva a day?” he says. This, I discover, is Jackson’s style. He dispenses his knowledge in handy sound-bytes.

<sup>4</sup> Rekerro is owned by Ron Beaton, a third-generation Kenyan who also runs a lodge on the reserve’s northern fringes. It is an idyllic campsite—the loveliest I have ever seen—in a secluded part of the reserve where other vehicles seldom venture. Blue flycatchers and golden orioles flit among the leaves. By day, herds of zebra come down to drink at the Talek River. There are no fences; and at night, elephant, buffalo, hippo, and lion regularly wander between the tents.

<sup>5</sup> Next morning Jackson has planned a full-day game drive to the Mara Triangle, a remote and beautiful area bordering the Serengeti National Park.

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“On Safari with the Experts” by Brian Jackman, copyright © Brian Jackman, from [www.aardvarksafaris.com](http://www.aardvarksafaris.com). Used by permission.

*One of the worst mistakes we can make in life is not to be alive enough, aware enough, of the magic in simple things. My daughter, Sarah, now a teenager, reminded me of that lesson a few years ago and I hope I'll never forget.*

---

by Steve Pollick

It is a midwinter's Sunday night, sometime after supper, and I find myself walking slowly on a country lane near home, pondering this mighty question:

"Daddy, is there really a sheriff's star?"

The question comes from a soft, eight-year-old voice connected invisibly to a small, bemitted hand that grasps my big, bare hand. I have to listen closely to catch all the words, some of which are directed at boot-tops.

Sarah Katherine is starwalking with her Dad.

Her voice is barely audible over the shuffling and padding of our footsteps in the rural quiet, a chill westerly breeze behind us. "The kids at school all draw their stars like a sheriff's star, and they say there's a real one in the sky," she says.

Now I cannot say for sure that there is no sheriff's star in the sky. An answer to that question is not listed in my Dad's Book of Astronomy for Kids. And I certainly don't know everything, despite what Sarah Katherine may think. But I tell her that I don't think there is such a so-named star.

You have to be prepared for that sort of inquiry when you dare to say, "I'm going for a nightwalk; anyone want to come with me?"

The instant race of light footsteps across the kitchen floor above my head told me that someone was eager to go. Sarah. After a few minutes spent wrestling with her leggings, coat, stocking cap, mittens, and scarf, we set out.

"Daddy, this is funner than sittin' around the house," Sarah says, talking faster than we are walking.

"I hear the wind," she adds quickly. It is moaning softly through the high-voltage lines well overhead. The lines march across the neighbors' farms and tower over the local country lanes on tall, gangly steel skeletons and mighty wooden poles.

We also hear the buzzing of supercharged electricity as it bolts through the power lines. We crane our necks far back to see the crossarms and the insulators—way, way up there, almost to the stars.

"Daddy, are we going as far as Spooky Tree?" Yes, to Spooky Tree and beyond.

Spooky Tree, so named by Sarah, is a gnarly old black walnut. It is the sole survivor of its kind along this otherwise barren stretch of farm lane. Its twisted, weather-beaten limbs stand out starkly in the night light. I've told Halloween stories around its trunk.

It is a perfect night, the starry pinpoint sparkles of diamonds dotting a velvet sky. The air is cold—crisply, not uncomfortably, so. Sarah is well bundled. Her rubber bootheels drag on the macadam of the lane—clop, clop, clop.



Two small mittens surround my cold hand. "I'll keep your hands warm, Daddy."

Presently I begin a primer lesson on celestial navigation. I point out the Big Dipper.

"See?" I say, dropping to one knee and using my favorite walking stick, a wrinkly old piece of tree root from Pennsylvania, as a pointer. "Those stars there. It's like a big pot with a long crooked handle. See how they go?" More pointing and gesturing. Our eyes by now are well attuned to the starlit dark.

"And those two stars at the front edge of the pot," I say, "they point right up at the North Star—right there! That's North. And the North Star is the last star in the handle of the Little Dipper. It's like a small pot. See how it pours into the big pot?"

"Uh-huh, Daddy. I see it." We walk on.

"Can we keep walking longer, Daddy?"

"Daddy, I like to make things out of the stars by connecting them." So have adults, I tell her.

We see Orion, the Hunter, right overhead in the southern sky. Orion's great Belt is easy to pick out, as is the tip of his sword and his hunting bow. Below and left is Sirius, the Dog Star. Sirius is Orion's dog.

"Like Blondie is our dog, Daddy?" Yes, sort of.

We see the Seven Sisters, the Pleiades, and I talk about the lost sister in the myth. Sarah doesn't understand myths, but she feels bad for the lost "girl."

We head for the bridge over Muskellunge Creek by Longanbach Farm. We call it the "crick," not "creek."

The creekwater twinkles in the waxing, three-quarter moon and chuckles as it pours over the rocks. Its animation is inspirational: "Moonsparkles on the water, Daddy. See them?"

We check the water on both sides of the bridge. A mild spell has thawed the water and the creek flows in good health.

Presently, a light haze drifts in under the moon, forming a big ring in the moonlight.

I point out Jupiter and Mars, and how they follow about the same path as the sun across the sky. The two planets are both inside the ring around the moon. I tell how the ring means wet weather is coming. My prediction is accepted as if gospel. Weather forecasters should have it so good.

We retrace our way back toward home, but Sarah, vowing she's not cold, asks to continue. "Just a little more, Daddy."

We head down toward "our bridge," which crosses the Muskellunge. The haze has slipped away on the wind and the moonlight again is sharply bright. Our shadows, cast down from bridge to water, stand out starkly. We see more moonsparkles.

As we turn for home, I see—make that feel—a shadow cross our path. I look up and back quickly.

"Sarah, look!" I whisper hoarsely. She turns and sees the dark form of a great bird gliding silently down the creekbottom, guided as precisely along the meanders of the creek as if it were on rails.

It is a great horned owl, a flying tiger, out on a night hunt.

I tell Sarah how the big owl has specially designed feathers, which allow it to glide in perfect silence and catch stuff, like mice, to eat. My pupil drinks it in, her mitten tightening its grip.

The talk winds down. There is much for each of us to absorb. I find myself thinking of other starwalks, especially one when I took Sarah's older brothers, Andy and Aaron, out another winter night years ago.

<sup>37</sup> Aaron must have been about three then. He was too small to negotiate the deep-plowed furrows on the Dickman Farm, so I ended up carrying him on my shoulders. This was a cross-country starwalk to a special place, another "spooky tree"—a big old cottonwood, another lone sentinel of the farmland.

I especially remember telling the boys to keep the flashlight turned off, to let them learn how well their eyes can see at night if given the chance. I remember, too, taking them right up to the old tree, letting them finger the rough bark and search and probe its texture with their fingers.

The next spring, a man with a bulldozer pushed the old tree to the ground. Then he cut it up and burned it to ashes, its history gone up in so much smoke. I hope that tree will live in the boys' memories as it has in mine.

My reverie is broken with Blondie's barking. Her incredible dog ears have caught the clopping of our feet on the road, and she lets Sarah and me know she's unhappy that she wasn't asked along.

Too soon, our walk is over. But I'll come to find out later that a starfire was lit this night in a little girl. She talked for days about our starwalk, and now regularly asks to go again.

By chance, after my young starwalker was asleep, I happened on a passage from Antoine de Saint Exupery's classic, *The Little Prince*. For me, it was a wonderful coincidence, a perfect ending to a perfect evening.

"All men have the stars," the passage went, "but they are not the same things for different people. For some, who are travelers, the stars are guides. For others they are no more than little lights in the sky. For others, who are scholars, they are problems... You—you alone—have the stars as no one else has them."

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# Rough Road Ahead: Do Not Exceed Posted Speed Limit

by Joe Kurmaskie

FORGET THAT OLD SAYING ABOUT NEVER taking candy from strangers. No, a better piece of advice for the solo cyclist would be, "Never accept travel advice from a collection of old-timers who haven't left the confines of their porches since Carter<sup>1</sup> was in office." It's not that a group of old guys doesn't know the terrain. With age comes wisdom and all that, but the world is a fluid place. Things change.

At a reservoir campground outside of Lodi, California, I enjoyed the serenity of an early-summer evening and some lively conversation with these old codgers.<sup>2</sup> What I shouldn't have done was let them have a peek at my map. Like a foolish youth, the next morning I followed their advice and launched out at first light along a "shortcut" that was to slice away hours from my ride to Yosemite National Park.

They'd sounded so sure of themselves when pointing out landmarks and spouting off towns I would come to along this breezy jaunt.

Things began well enough. I rode into the morning with strong legs and a smile on my face. About forty miles into the pedal, I arrived at the first "town." This place might have been a thriving little spot at one time—say, before the last world war—but on that morning it fit the traditional definition of a ghost town. I chuckled, checked my water supply, and moved on. The sun was beginning to beat down, but I barely noticed it. The cool pines and rushing rivers of Yosemite had my name written all over them.

Twenty miles up the road, I came to a fork of sorts. One ramshackle shed, several rusty pumps, and a corral that couldn't hold in the lamest mule greeted me. This sight was troubling. I had been hitting my water bottles pretty regularly, and I was traveling through the high deserts of California in June.

I got down on my hands and knees, working the handle of the rusted water pump with all my strength. A tarlike substance oozed out, followed by brackish water feeling somewhere in the neighborhood of two hundred degrees. I pumped that handle for several minutes, but the water wouldn't cool down. It didn't matter. When I tried a drop or two, it had the flavor of battery acid.

The old guys had sworn the next town was only eighteen miles down the road. I could make that! I would conserve my water and go inward for an hour or so—a test of my inner spirit.

Not two miles into this next section of the ride, I noticed the terrain changing. Flat road was replaced by short, rolling hills. After I had crested the first few of these, a large highway sign jumped out at me. It read: ROUGH ROAD AHEAD: DO NOT EXCEED POSTED SPEED LIMIT.

The speed limit was 55 mph. I was doing a water-depleting 12 mph. Sometimes life can feel so cruel.

I toiled on. At some point, tumbleweeds crossed my path and a ridiculously large snake—it really did look like a diamondback—blocked the majority of the pavement in front of me. I eased past, trying to keep my balance in my dehydrated state.

The water bottles contained only a few tantalizing sips. Wide rings of dried sweat circled my shirt, and the growing realization that I could drop from heatstroke on a gorgeous day in June simply because I listened to some gentlemen who hadn't been off their porch in decades, caused me to laugh.

It was a sad, hopeless laugh, mind you, but at least I still had the energy to feel sorry for myself. There was no one in sight, not a building, car, or structure of any kind. I began

breaking the ride down into distances I could see on the horizon, telling myself that if I could make it that far, I'd be fine.

Over one long, crippling hill, a building came into view. I wiped the sweat from my eyes to make sure it wasn't a mirage, and tried not to get too excited. With what I believed was my last burst of energy, I maneuvered down the hill.

In an ironic twist that should please all sadists reading this, the building—abandoned years earlier, by the looks of it—had been a Welch's Grape Juice factory and bottling plant. A sandblasted picture of a young boy pouring a refreshing glass of juice into his mouth could still be seen.

I hung my head.

That smoky blues tune "Summertime" rattled around in the dry honeycombs of my deteriorating brain.

I got back on the bike, but not before I gathered up a few pebbles and stuck them in my mouth. I'd read once that sucking on stones helps take your mind off thirst by allowing what spit you have left to circulate. With any luck I'd hit a bump and lodge one in my throat.

It didn't really matter. I was going to die and the birds would pick me clean, leaving only some expensive outdoor gear and a diary with the last entry in praise of old men, their wisdom, and their keen sense of direction. I made a mental note to change that paragraph if it looked like I was going to lose consciousness for the last time.

Somehow, I climbed away from the abandoned factory of juices and dreams, slowly gaining elevation while losing hope. Then, as easily as rounding a bend, my troubles, thirst, and fear were all behind me.

GARY AND WILBER'S FISH CAMP—IF YOU WANT BAIT FOR THE BIG ONES, WE'RE YOUR BEST BET!

"And the only bet," I remember thinking.

As I stumbled into a rather modern bathroom and drank deeply from the sink, I had an overwhelming urge to seek out Gary and Wilber, kiss them, and buy some bait—any bait, even though I didn't own a rod or reel.

An old guy sitting in a chair under some shade nodded in my direction. Cool water dripped from my head as I slumped against the wall beside him.

"Where you headed in such a hurry?"

"Yosemite," I whispered.

"Know the best way to get there?"

I watched him from the corner of my eye for a long moment. He was even older than the group I'd listened to in Lodi.

"Yes, sir! I own a very good map."

And I promised myself right then that I'd always stick to it in the future.

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<sup>1</sup> Carter: Jimmy Carter, President of the United States, 1977–1981

<sup>2</sup> codgers: eccentric men

# Breakfast

by Tony Earley

During the night something like a miracle happened: Jim's age grew an extra digit. He was nine years old when he went to sleep, but ten years old when he woke up. The extra number had weight, like a muscle, and Jim hefted<sup>1</sup> it like a prize. The uncles' ages each contained two numbers, and now Jim's age contained two numbers as well. He smiled and stretched and sniffed the morning. Wood smoke; biscuits baking; the cool, rivy smell of dew. Something not quite daylight looked in his window, and something not quite darkness stared back out. A tired cricket sang itself to sleep. The cricket had worked all night. Jim rose to meet the waiting day.

Jim's mother opened the stove door with a dishrag. Mama was tall and pale and handsome; her neck was long and white. Although she was not yet thirty years old, she wore a long, black skirt that had belonged to her mother. The skirt did not make her seem older, but rather made the people in the room around her feel odd, as if they had wandered into an old photograph, and did not know how to behave. On the days Mama wore her mother's long clothes, Jim didn't let the screen door slam.

"There he is," Mama said. "The birthday boy."

Jim's heart rose up briefly, like a scrap of paper on a breath of wind, and then quickly settled back to the ground. His love for his mother was tethered<sup>2</sup> by a sympathy Jim felt knotted in the dark of his stomach. The death of Jim's father had broken something inside her that had not healed. She pulled the heaviness that had once been grief behind her like a plow. The uncles, the women of the church, the people of the town, had long since given up on trying to talk her into leaving the plow where it lay. Instead they grew used to stepping over, or walking inside, the deep furrows she left in her wake. Jim knew only that his mother was sad, and that he figured somehow in her sadness. When she leaned over to kiss him, the lilaced smell of her cheek was as sweet and sad at once as the smell of freshly turned earth in the churchyard.

"Oh Jimmy," she said. "How in the world did you get to be ten years old?"

"I don't know, Mama," Jim said, which was the truth. He was as amazed by the fact as she was. He had been alive for ten years; his father, who had also been named Jim Glass, had been dead for ten years and a week. It was a lot to think about before breakfast.

Mama put the biscuits she pulled from the oven into a straw basket. Jim carried the basket into the dining room. The uncles sat around the long table.

"Who's that?" Uncle Coran said.

"I don't know," said Uncle Al.

"He sure is funny-looking, whoever he is," said Uncle Zeno.

"Y'all know who I am," said Jim.

"Can't say that we do," said Uncle Coran.

"I'm Jim."

"Howdy," said Uncle Al.

"Y'all stop it," Jim said.

The uncles were tall, skinny men with broad shoulders and big hands. Every morning they ate between them two dozen biscuits and a dozen scrambled eggs and a platter of ham. They washed it all down with a pot of black coffee and tall glasses of fresh milk.

"Those biscuits you got there, Jim?" said Uncle Zeno.

Jim nodded.

"Better sit down, then."

In all things Jim strove to be like the uncles. He ate biscuits and eggs until he thought he was going to be sick. When Uncle Zeno finally said, "You think you got enough to eat, Doc?" Jim dropped his fork as if he had received a pardon.

Uncle Zeno was Jim's oldest uncle. His age was considerable, up in the forties somewhere. Uncle Coran and Uncle Al were twins. Each of them swore that he did not look like the other one, which of course wasn't true. They looked exactly alike, until you knew them, and sometimes even then. Not one of the uncles found it funny that they lived in identical houses.

Uncle Al and Uncle Coran built their houses when they were young men, but, like Uncle Zeno, they never took wives. Most of the rooms in their houses didn't even have furniture; only Uncle Zeno's house had a cookstove.

Jim's mother cooked and cleaned for the uncles. When she said it was too much, the uncles hired a woman to help her. Uncle Coran ran the feed store and cotton gin. Uncle Al managed the farms. Uncle Zeno farmed with Uncle Al and operated the gristmill on Saturday mornings. As the head of the family he kept an eye on everyone else. Occasionally the uncles grew cross with each other, and, for a few days, Uncle Al and Uncle Coran would retire to their houses immediately after supper. There they sat by their own fires, or on their own porches, and kept their own counsel<sup>3</sup> until their anger passed. In general, however, everyone in the family got along well with everyone else; to Jim, the sound of harsh words would always strike his ear as oddly as a hymn played in the wrong key.

Jim patted his stomach. "That ought to hold me till dinner," he said.

"You ate a right smart," Uncle Coran said.

"Well," said Jim, "I am ten years old now."

"My, my," said Uncle Al.

"I've been thinking it's about time for me to go to work with y'all," Jim said.

"Hmm," said Uncle Zeno.

"I thought maybe you could use some help hoeing that corn."

"We can usually put a good hand to work," Uncle Zeno said. "You a good hand?"

"Yes, sir," said Jim.

"You ain't afraid to work?"

"No, sir."

"What do you say, boys?" Uncle Zeno said.

Uncle Al and Uncle Coran looked at each other. Uncle Coran winked.

"He'll do, I guess," said Uncle Al.

"Let's get at it, then," said Uncle Zeno.

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<sup>1</sup> hefted: lifted

<sup>2</sup> tethered: bound

<sup>3</sup> kept their own counsel: stayed by themselves

"Breakfast" from *Jim the Boy* by Tony Earley, copyright © 2000 by Tony Earley. Used by permission of Little, Brown, and Company.

# Ghost Crab

by Rachel Carson

The shore at night is a different world, in which the very darkness that hides the distractions of daylight brings into sharper focus the elemental<sup>1</sup> realities. Once, exploring the night beach, I surprised a small ghost crab in the searching beam of my torch. He was lying in a pit he had dug just above the surf, as though watching the sea and waiting. The blackness of the night possessed water, air, and beach. It was the darkness of an older world, before Man. There was no sound but the all-enveloping, primeval<sup>2</sup> sounds of wind blowing over water and sand, and of waves crashing on the beach. There was no other visible life—just one small crab near the sea. I have seen hundreds of ghost crabs in other settings, but suddenly I was filled with the odd sensation that for the first time I knew the creature in its own world—that I understood, as never before, the essence of its being. In that moment time was suspended; the world to which I belonged did not exist and I might have been an onlooker from outer space. The little crab alone with the sea became a symbol that stood for life itself—for the delicate, destructible, yet incredibly vital force that somehow holds its place amid the harsh realities of the inorganic<sup>3</sup> world.

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<sup>1</sup> elemental: essential, basic

<sup>2</sup> primeval: ancient, prehistoric

<sup>3</sup> inorganic: not composed of living matter

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## Down with the Forests

by Charles Kuralt

BALTIMORE MARYLAND. I was waiting for breakfast in a coffee shop the other morning and reading the paper. The paper had sixty-six pages. The waitress brought a paper placemat and a paper napkin and took my order, and I paged through the paper.

The headline said, "House Panel Studies a Bill Allowing Clear-Cutting in U.S. Forests."

I put the paper napkin in my lap, spread the paper out on the paper placemat, and read on: "The House Agriculture Committee," it said, "is looking over legislation that would once again open national forests to the clear-cutting of trees by private companies under government permits."

The waitress brought the coffee. I opened a paper sugar envelope and tore open a little paper cup of cream and went on reading the paper: "The Senate voted without dissent yesterday to allow clear-cutting," the paper said. "Critics have said clear-cutting in the national forests can lead to erosion and destruction of wildlife habitats. Forest Service and industry spokesmen said a flat ban on clear-cutting would bring paralysis to the lumber industry." And to the paper industry, I thought. Clear-cutting a forest is one way to get a lot of paper, and we sure seem to need a lot of paper.

The waitress brought the toast. I looked for the butter. It came on a little paper tray with a covering of paper. I opened a paper package of marmalade and read on: "Senator Jennings Randolph, Democrat of West Virginia, urged his colleagues to take a more restrictive view and permit clear-cutting only under specific guidelines for certain types of forest. But neither he nor anyone else voted against the bill, which was sent to the House on a 90 to 0 vote."

The eggs came, with little paper packages of salt and pepper. I finished breakfast, put the paper under my arm, and left the table with its used and useless paper napkin, paper placemat, paper salt and pepper packages, paper butter and marmalade wrappings, paper sugar envelope, and paper cream holder, and I walked out into the morning wondering how our national forests can ever survive our breakfasts.

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## A Sea Worry

by Maxine Hong Kingston

THIS SUMMER MY SON body-surfs. He says it's his "job" and rises each morning at 5:30 to catch the bus to Sandy Beach. I hope that by September he will have had enough of the ocean. Tall waves throw surfers against the shallow bottom. Undertows have snatched them away. Sharks prowl Sandy's. Joseph told me that once he got out of the water because he saw an enormous shark. "Did you tell the lifeguard?" I asked. "No." "Why not?" "I didn't want to spoil the surfing." The ocean pulls at the boys, who turn into surfing addicts. At sunset you can see the surfers waiting for the last golden wave.

"Why do you go surfing so often?" I ask my students.

"It feels so good," they say. "Inside the tube, I can't describe it. There are no words for it."

"You can describe it," I scold, and I am very angry. "Everything can be described. Find the words for it, you lazy boy. Why don't you go home and read?" I am afraid that the boys give themselves up to the ocean's mindlessness.

When the waves are up, surfers all over Hawaii don't do their homework. They cut school. They know how the surf is breaking at any moment because every fifteen minutes the reports come over the radio; in fact, one of my former students is the surf reporter.

Some boys leave for mainland colleges, and write their parents heart-rending letters. They beg to come home for Thanksgiving. "If I can just touch the ocean," they write from Missouri and Kansas, "I'll last for the rest of the semester." Some come home for Christmas and don't go back.

Even when the assignment is about something else, the students write about surfing. They try to describe what it is to be inside the wave as it curls over them. Making a tube or "chamber" or "green room" or "pipeline" or "time warp." They write about the silence, the peace, "no hassles," the feeling of being reborn as they shoot out the end. They've written about the perfect wave. Their writing is full of clichés. "The endless summer," they say. "Unreal."

Surfing is like a religion. Among the martyrs are George Helm, Kimo Mitchell, and Eddie Aikau. Helm and Mitchell were lost at sea riding their surfboards from Kaho'olawe, where they had gone to protest the Navy's bombing of that island. Eddie Aikau was a champion surfer and lifeguard. A storm had capsized the *Hokule'a*, the ship that traced the route that the Polynesian ancestors sailed from Tahiti, and Eddie Aikau had set out on his board to get help.

Since the ocean captivates our son, we decided to go with him to Sandy's.

<sup>10</sup> We got up before dawn, picked up his friend, Marty, and drove out of Honolulu. Almost all the traffic was going in the opposite direction, the freeway coned to make more lanes into the city. We came to a place where raw mountains rose on our left and the sea fell on our right, smashing against the cliffs. The strip of cliff pulverized into sand is Sandy's. "Dangerous Current Exist," said the ungrammatical sign.

Earl and I sat on the shore with our blankets and thermos of coffee. Joseph and Marty put on their fins and stood at the edge of the sea for a moment, touching the water with their fingers and crossing their hearts before going in. There were fifteen boys out there, all about the same age, fourteen to twenty, all with the same kind of lean v-shaped build, most of them with black hair that made their wet heads look like sea lions. It was hard to tell whether our kid was one of those who popped up after a big wave. A few had surfboards, which are against the rules at a body-surfing beach, but the lifeguard wasn't on duty that day.

As they watched for the next wave the boys turned toward the ocean. They gazed slightly upward; I thought of altar boys before a great god. When a good wave arrived, they turned, faced shore, and came shooting in, some taking the wave to the right and some to the left, their bodies fish-like, one arm out in front, the hand and fingers pointed before them, like a swordfish's beak. A few held credit card trays, and some slid in on trays from McDonald's.

"That is no country for middle-aged women," I said. We had on bathing suits underneath our clothes in case we felt moved to participate. There were no older men either.

Even from the shore, we could see inside the tubes. Sometimes, when they came at an angle, we saw into them a long way. When the wave dug into the sand, it formed a brown tube or a golden one. The magic ones, though, were made out of just water, green and turquoise rooms, translucent walls and ceiling. I saw one that was powder-blue, perfect, thin; the sun filled it with sky blue and white light. The best thing, the kids say, is when you are in the middle of the tube, and there is water all around you but you're dry.

The waves came in sets; the boys passed up the smaller ones. Inside a big one, you could see their bodies hanging upright, knees bent, duckfeet fins paddling, bodies dangling there in the wave.

Once in a while, we heard a boy yell, "Aa-who!" "Poon tah!" "Aaroo!" And then we noticed how rare a human voice was here; the surfers did not talk, but silently, silently rode the waves.

Since Joseph and Marty were considerate of us, they stopped after two hours, and we took them out for breakfast. We kept asking them how it felt, so they would not lose language.

"Like a stairwell in an apartment building," said Joseph, which I liked immensely. He hasn't been in very many apartment buildings, so had to reach a bit to get the simile. "I saw somebody I knew coming toward me in the tube, and I shouted, 'Jeff. Hey Jeff,' and my voice echoed like a stairwell in an apartment building. Jeff and I came straight at each other—mirror tube."

"Are there ever girls out there?" EarlI asked. "There's a few who come out at about eleven," said Marty.

"How old are they?"

"About twenty."

"Why do you cross your heart with water?"

"So the ocean doesn't kill us."

I describe the powder-blue tube I had seen.

"That part of Sandy's is called Chambers," they said.

I am relieved that the surfers keep asking one another for descriptions. I also find some comfort in the stream of commuter traffic, cars filled with men over twenty, passing Sandy Beach on their way to work.

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Excerpt from "A Sea Worry" by Maxine Hong Kingston, copyright © 1978 by Maxine Hong Kingston. Used by permission of the author.

# Mussels in April<sup>1</sup>

by Peter Neumeyer

"All months with R,"<sup>2</sup> my father said  
So

—come April, wearing slip-proof Keds  
we'd leap the rocks,  
start up the squawking gulls,  
crouch, wrench, twist the bearded blueblack treasures  
streaked with silver.

5

Once home, we'd turn the pail, discard the open,  
simmer in seaweed and their own salt tears  
those sealed mysteries till they gapped  
and through the smallest slit, their golden eyes  
would squint.

10

These family moments—cold outings, simmering pots,  
scraped fingers, salty steam, the clickclack shells—  
these rituals to my children I'll pass on;  
and they'll do likewise when I'm gone.

15

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<sup>1</sup> Mussels: soft-bodied water animal that is protected by its shell; saltwater mussels live in shallow coastal waters, where they attach themselves to rocks

<sup>2</sup> "All months with R": a saying that means it is safe to eat shellfish during the cooler months with names containing an "R" (September through April)

"Mussels in April" by Peter Neumeyer, from *Food Fight*, copyright © 1986 by Share Our Strength, Inc. Reprinted with permission of Share Our Strength, Inc

# Anna and the King

## Introduction

The year is 1862. Anna Leonowens is an English woman living in India whose husband, a captain in the British Army, has recently died. To support herself and her young son Louis, she accepts a position as tutor to the son of the King of Siam. She arrives in Bangkok with Louis and two Indian servants, knowing no one. Although she has been promised a house of her own, she finds that she has been assigned quarters in the palace; she asks to see the king, but the Prime Minister, known as the Kralahome, tells her that she must wait until the king is ready to see her. He addresses Anna as *Sir* because women are not allowed to stand in the king's presence, and Anna refuses to kneel.

The Grand Palace, Bangkok.  
Several weeks after Anna's arrival.

*The Kralahome escorts Anna and Louis to the Hall of Audience. There, ranged on a deep red carpet is a throng of prostrate<sup>1</sup> noblemen and courtiers facing a raised dais; on it, the imposing figure of Siam's ruler, King Mongkut, sits on a golden throne. Just off the dais stands Alak, his Majesty's highly decorated Consul-General. A French emissary advances to present His Majesty with a jewel-encrusted sword.*

LOUIS (*whispering*): Look at the sword!

ANNA: It's a gift from the French. (*King Mongkut delivers a clapped command to the interpreter, who accepts the sword. The entire assemblage begins a series of bows.*)

KRALAHOME: It appears Sir must wait to meet His Majesty another day.

ANNA: I do not think so. (*She takes her son's hand and hurries down the stairs toward the throne as musicians play the king's exit. Kralahome, caught off-guard, hurries to catch up with her. She curtsies deeply as she approaches the king.*) Your Majesty, my name is Anna Leonowens. (*King Mongkut turns, shocked. His bodyguards draw swords, blocking Anna's path.*) I am the schoolteach—

MONGKUT: STOP!!! (*Startled, Anna does just that. King Mongkut strides toward her.*) WHO?!?

KRALAHOME (*prostrating himself*): Your Majesty, Mme<sup>2</sup> Anna Leonowens and son, Louis.

ANNA: Your Majesty, I have waited nearly three weeks.

MONGKUT: SILENCE! (*He gazes at Anna, intrigued.*) YOU are teacher?

ANNA (*flustered*): Yes, I am.

MONGKUT: You do not look sufficient of age. How many years have you?

ANNA: Enough to know that age and wisdom do not necessarily go hand in hand, Your Majesty. (*King Mongkut nods. Then he abruptly heads off.*)

KRALAHOME: His Majesty has not dismissed you. Follow him! (*Anna and Louis run to keep up with the king.*)

MONGKUT: You articulate logical answer under pressure, Mme Leonowens—

ANNA: That is very kind of—

MONGKUT: —but irritating superior attitude King find most unbeautiful. However, it will serve you well given decision I now make. (*They reach a pair of massive double doors.*)

Along with Prince Chulalongkorn, you shall teach my children. (*Guards push open the doors and the trio step into the gardens of the children's park. Scores of princes and princesses, none older than eleven, play around pools and pavilions. Peacocks stroll the grounds. A gong announces the king's presence. Everyone turns, sees the king, and drops to the ground.*) Attention, my most blessed and royal family, we have company. (*King Mongkut motions Anna and Louis to follow him. He stops before a teenage boy, and nods his head. This is Prince Chulalongkorn, King Mongkut's oldest son.*) Presenting Heir Apparent, Prince Chulalongkorn. And this, my son, is your new teacher.

PRINCE (*astonished*): Why do you punish me with imperialist schoolteacher? (*King Mongkut, understanding his son's distress, turns to the crowd.*)

MONGKUT: Dearest family, I desire you all to be educated in English language, science, and literature. You must never forget to honor your renowned teacher, Mme Anna Leonowens.

ANNA: Your Majesty, the opportunity to begin a school is exciting. Such devotion to progress is to be commended.

MONGKUT: As father, I understand.

ANNA: Then Your Majesty appreciates why having a home outside the palace is of such importance to me.

MONGKUT (*firmly*): It is my pleasure that you live in the palace.

ANNA (*equally firmly*): But it is not mine, Your Majesty.

MONGKUT (*eyes flashing*): You do not set conditions, and you shall OBEY!

ANNA: May I respectfully remind His Majesty that I am not his servant, but his guest.

MONGKUT (*after a tense moment*): A guest who is paid. (*He heads for the gates.*)

ANNA: And what of our house?

MONGKUT (*without turning*): Everything has its own time. (*He is gone. The entire crowd stares at Anna in awe. A woman has just argued with their king.*)

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<sup>1</sup> prostrate: lying face down, as in submission

<sup>2</sup> Mme: abbreviation for Madame

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## English Indicator 1.2.1

### Answer Key

Public Release Item #1 - Selected Response (SR) - 2005  
D. wise

Public Release Item #2 - Selected Response (SR) - 2005  
A. helpful but quiet in manner

Public Release Item #3 - Selected Response (SR) - 2005  
C. paragraph 3

Public Release Item #4 - Selected Response (SR) - 2005  
D. instructive

Public Release Item #5 - Selected Response (SR) - 2007  
A. the lack of water

Public Release Item #6 - Selected Response (SR) - 2006  
D. understanding

Public Release Item #7 - Selected Response (SR) - 2006  
C. respectful

Public Release Item #8 - Selected Response (SR) - 2007  
D. confidence followed by determination and then relief

Public Release Item #9 - Selected Response (SR) - 2007  
A. worries about the effect people have on the environment

Public Release Item #10 - Selected Response (SR) - 2007  
C. her son and his friends describe a surfing experience

Public Release Item #11 - Selected Response (SR) - 2007  
A. She asks if they told the lifeguard about the shark.

Public Release Item #12 - Brief Constructed Response (BCR) - 2005  
Refer to Annotated Student Responses and Scoring Rubric

Public Release Item #13 - Brief Constructed Response (BCR) - 2006  
Refer to Annotated Student Responses and Scoring Rubric

Public Release Item #14 - Brief Constructed Response (BCR) - 2007  
Refer to Annotated Student Responses and Scoring Rubric

## Rubric - Brief Constructed Response (BCR)

### Score 3

The response demonstrates an understanding of the complexities of the text.

- Addresses the demands of the question
- Uses expressed and implied information from the text
- Clarifies and extends understanding beyond the literal

### Score 2

The response demonstrates a partial or literal understanding of the text.

- Addresses the demands of the question, although may not develop all parts equally
- Uses some expressed or implied information from the text to demonstrate understanding
- May not fully connect the support to a conclusion or assertion made about the text(s)

### Score 1

The response shows evidence of a minimal understanding of the text.

- May show evidence that some meaning has been derived from the text
- May indicate a misreading of the text or the question
- May lack information or explanation to support an understanding of the text in relation to the question

### Score 0

The response is completely irrelevant or incorrect, or there is no response.